
ABROAD

HARARE

White MPs, Adieu

Zimbabwe will celebrate its seventh birthday in April by eliminating the seats reserved for whites in the House of Assembly. That is when, under the terms of the 1979 agreement that gave the country independence, Parliament will be able to change its own composition, and Prime Minister Robert Mugabe's government has promised that the twenty statutory white seats will be the first thing to go. This would mean the end of the political activity of Zimbabwe's most famous white, Ian Smith. Smith, the premier of the country when it was called Rhodesia and subject to British responsibility, set up an independent government in 1965 and survived 15 years of boycotts and sanctions before bowing to the creation of a black-African state. Smith's recent advice to South Africans to resist world opinion in the same way brought a storm of criticism here; observers say this incident will hasten the total elimination of white representation in the government. There are also ten white senators in Zimbabwe's consultative upper house. Mugabe is said to have decided to do away with the senate completely, and also with the titular and ceremonial presidency.

LUANDA

Ally-Dumping?

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is known to believe that his government is spending too much on Third World programs, especially those that are not cost-effective. Reports received here now say he is dissatisfied with the performance of Angola's Marxist regime in its long and unsuccessful struggle to defeat anti-Communist rebel insurgents of the UNITA movement led by Jonas Savimbi. For 12 years the Angolan government, with the help of twenty to thirty thousand Cuban troops, has given ground to UNITA, while the country's agricultural production and social structures, developed by the Portuguese colonizers, crumbled into ruins. Savimbi now controls large sections of southern Angola and the economic trump card, the Benguela Railroad. Savimbi, who has had American support through the years, is now in possession of sophisticated U.S. weapons that pose a severe threat to government defenses. The Soviet ambassador in Luanda, Arnold Kalinin, is reported to be pushing Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos to step up Angola's recent feelers to the West for money and technical aid. Meanwhile, the Cubans are spreading rumors to the effect that dos Santos is incompetent and will soon be replaced.

BUCHAREST

Rambo as Subversive

Rambo is making his presence felt in Rumania as an anti-government force. His name is being scrawled on walls and his film cassettes are in heavy demand among the viewers of black-market VCRs in this most isolated and retrogressive Communist country. The limiting of television programming to two hours a day, and that devoted only to President Ceausescu's speeches, has pushed the population toward VCRs, which are supplied through underground systems using the large number of Middle Eastern

students in the Rumanian capital. Ceausescu, whose large family is prominently employed in top government positions, recently chose the opportunity of his seventieth birthday to denounce the Soviet Union and Hungary for "faithlessness" to Communist tenets.

REGGIO EMILIA

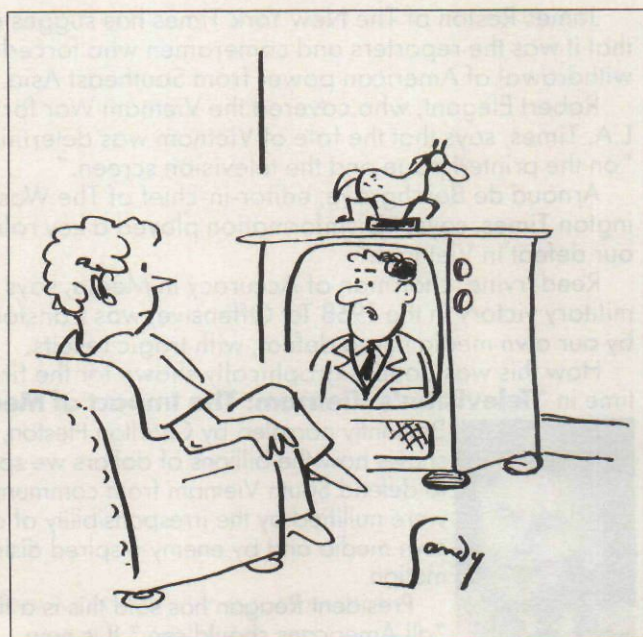
Abstinence

Bishop Gilberto Baroni of this prosperous central Italian city has a novel idea of what the faithful of his diocese ought to be giving up during Lent. "In these forty days," he says in a pastoral letter, "we should learn how to react to this epidemic of modern times called video addiction." This, the bishop explained, "is the mania of watching everything the television blares forth night and day with no respect for silence, tranquillity, infants, or children." He recommended prayer and "discipline of the senses" in its place, in order to let the mind and spirit rest and grow. Also on the list of episcopal proscriptions were idle and frequent visits to bars, day-long coffee drinking, smoking, and the eating of ice cream.

GUADALCANAL

Ex Litore Clamavi

Most people think of the giant clam of the South Pacific coral reefs as the nemesis of the pearl diver or the underwater explorer. Its huge shell snaps shut on a leg or an arm, and in a thrashing of bubbles the poor man drowns. Now it turns out that this beast is highly edible. Total meat from a single clam can amount to four hundred pounds. The mollusk also yields chemicals for medical and cosmetic uses, and its shell is a rich source of calcium. To protect the species, and to rationalize its harvesting, a clam nursery has been established here called the Coastal Aquacultural Center. In their spawning period, the clams can produce five billion eggs a day. In normal conditions however, nearly all the eggs are eaten before they hatch. The nursery hopes to raise large numbers and set them out on reefs at the age of 18 months, at which point they need no further care.



"We switch you to Charles Orvis in Capistrano, who is interviewing a swallow."

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